

Message Text

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ACTION DPW-01

INFO OCT-01 EA-06 IO-10 ISO-00 DODE-00 PM-03 SS-15 NSC-05

SP-02 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PRS-01 SR-02 ORM-01

AID-05 L-02 H-01 /062 W

----- 055561

R 260941Z FEB 75

FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2673

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

USMISSION GENEVA

SECDEF WASHDC

CINCPAC

CDR JCRC CP SAMAE SAN THAI

C O N F I D E N T I A L VIENTIANE 1388

D/PW FOR HENDERSON

GENEVA FOR SIEVERTS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MOPS, CASC, LA

SUBJECT: DISCUSSION OF DEAN/SHARMAN CASE WITH
AUSTRALIAN AMBASSADOR

REFS: A) VIENTIANE 1193 (NOTAL)

B) VIENTIANE 1247 (NOTAL)

C) CANBERRA 1205 (NOTAL)

1. AUSTRALIAN AMBASSADOR BORTHWICK CALLED ON AMBASSADOR
FEBRUARY 25 TO LEAVE A COPY OF LETTER FROM SENATOR DON
WILLESEE, MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, TO LAO FOREIGN
MINISTER PHOUMI VONGVICHIT. BORTHWICK WILL DELIVER
LETTER AS SOON AS HE CAN ARRANGE AN APPOINTMENT WITH PHOUMI.
TEXT FOLLOWS:

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2. BEGIN TEXT: QUOTE - I WRITE TO YOU CONCERNING THE CONTINUED LACK OF INFORMATION ABOUT THE AUSTRALIAN JOURNALIST, MR. NEIL SHARMAN. AS YOU WILL BE AWARE FROM YOUR RECENT DISCUSSIONS WITH OUR AMBASSADOR IN VIENTIANE AND HIS LETTER TO YOU OF 21 JANUARY 1975, THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT IS CONCERNED THAT THE NEO LAO HAK SAN, ALTHOUGH IT HAS HELD NEIL SHARMAN (AND MR. DEAN) IN DETENTION SINCE 6 SEPTEMBER 1974, HAS REFUSED TO ACKNOWLEDGE THIS. IT IS A MATTER ON WHICH I HAVE RECEIVED A NUMBER OF REPRESENTATIONS FROM MR. SHARMAN'S RELATIVES AND THE AUSTRALIAN JOURNALISTS' ASSOCIATION, AND ONE WHICH I HAVE BEEN FOLLOWING CLOSELY. EOGXEM QUOTE - I HOPE THAT IT WILL BE POSSIBLE FOR THE NEO LAO HAK SAN TO CONFIRM IN THE NEAR FUTURE THAT MR. SHARMAN IS BEING DETAINED, AND TO AGREE EITHER TO HIS RELEASE OR TO THE EMBASSY IN VIENTIANE BEING GRANTED CONSULAR ACCESS TO HIM. UNQUOTE. END TEXT

4. AMBASSADOR BORTHWICK TOLD AMBASSADOR THAT 1,000 TONS OF RICE PROMISED TO PGNU BY GOA LAST YEAR HAD ARRIVED IN BANGKOK AND WOULD BE SHIPPED TO VIENTIANE IN NEAR FUTURE. HE SAID PRESS COVERAGE OF THIS DONATION WAS LIKELY AND COMMENTED THAT, GIVEN THE CURRENT ATTITUDE OF GOA CONCERNING SHARMAN CASE AS EXPRESSED IN WILLESEE'S LETTER, TIMING OF ARRIVAL OF RICE SHIPMENT WAS NOT PROPITIOUS. FURTHERMORE, IN RESPONSE TO RECENT PGNU REQUEST, GOA HAD AGREED TO FURNISH A C-47 AIRCRAFT TO ASSIST IN TRANSPORTATION OF REFUGEES FOR TWO-WEEK PERIOD. (STAFF OF UN HIGH COMMISSION FOR REFUGEES HAVE TOLD US AUSTRALIAN PLANE WILL HAVE TWO CREWS AND WILL PROBABLY FLY REFUGEES FROM PAKSANE TO PLAIN OF JARS.)

5. AMBASSADOR REVIEWED FOR BORTHWICK SUBSTANCE OF HIS CONVERSATIONS LAST WEEK WITH PRIME MINISTER AND FOREIGN MINISTER (REFTELS A AND B), NOTING USG POSITION THAT CONTINUED DETENTION OF DEAN/SHARMAN AND JANUARY 18 SHOOT-DOWN OF USAID CONTRACT HELICOPTER WERE NOT CONTRIBUTING TO IMPROVED RELATIONS DESIRED BY USG AND PGNU AND THAT QUESTION OF PROVIDING U.S. AIRCRAFT FOR MOVEMENT OF REFUGEES WOULD OBVIOUSLY BE INFLUENCED BY CONTINUED FAILURE OF PL TO

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ACT IN RESPONSIBLE MANNER. AMBASSADOR OBSERVED THAT PAST EFFORTS OF OUR TWO EMBASSIES ON DEAN/SHARMAN CASE HAD BEEN IN HARMONY AND SHOULD CONTINUE TO BE COORDINATED SINCE PATHET LAO APPEAR TO BE FEELING SOME HEAT. WE SHOULD THEREFORE MAINTAIN PRESSURE. HE SUGGESTED THAT OFFER OF AUSTRALIAN AIRPLANE HAD OCCURRED AT INOPPORTUNE TIME. AMBASSADOR BORTHWICK AGREED THAT, IN PRESENT SITUATION, OFFER OF U.S. AIRCRAFT WAS NOT TO BE EXPECTED.

6. COMMENT: GOA ACTIONS ARE ENCOURAGING, ALTHOUGH
IMMINENT RICE DELIVERY AND AUSTRALIAN OFFER OF AIRCRAFT
SOMEWHAT UNDERCUT GOA STANCE. WE HOPE THAT MISS HOOPER'S
CAMPAIGN WILL ALSO STIMULATE SOME FURTHER GOA EFFORTS.
IF, AS IT APPEARS, FONMIN WILLESEE HAS WRITTEN TO LAO
FONMIN RATHER THAN TO PRIME MINISTER, GOA MAY WISH TO
CONSIDER A WHITLAM-TO-SOUVANNA MESSAGE AS WELL.
WHITEHOUSE

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